

BRAILLE AND TALKING BOOK DEPARTMENT

Annual Report

1972

The year 1972 has been turbulent, exciting, maddening and productive. In perspective it feels like a watershed, one period drawing to a close and another emerging. There are many reasons for this, but the great milestone was set in December when Robert S. Bray, the distinguished Chief of the Library of Congress Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped retired. Under his leadership the service became dynamic and truly national in scope and purpose. His great achievements are well known and recounted elsewhere. They would not have happened without his burning passion to drive library service for the blind and handicapped into the main stream of library service, and the personal authority and warmth that inspired his staff and regional associates.

I. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Significant results of the year's work show the number of visually and physically handicapped readers increasing by 1,606 as compared with the addition of 355 blind persons. The percentage of handicapped readers has now grown from 30% to 40% of the total of 9,798. This was greatly influenced by the increase in nursing homes serviced, the new awareness that children with learning disabilities qualify for Talking Books, and particularly by the promotion of the service by the Rehabilitation Services Commission through its Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation.

The cassette service has tripled, Telex cassette duplicating equipment was purchased, and the staff of the Department carried out the basic work of the State Library of Ohio's Cassette Research Project under the direction of Dr. Genevieve Casey.

The changeover from the IBM computer program to that of CLSI required the reentry of all basic registration and reader service data. This created an unthinkable amount of work, stress and difficulty, but brought some immediate benefits that permitted new alignments in the organization of the staff. The newly focused service to children and institutions foreshadow the growth in creative professional service to all readers that will come with the fully implemented computerized circulation system now under consideration, and will free selectors from much tedious and time consuming work.

All of this was accomplished while absorbing seven new full time staff members - four new positions and three replacements - fourteen part time changes, three trainees, and unprecedented illness requiring substitute help. The assistance of Miss Shirley Miller lent by the School Services Department was greatly appreciated.

Increased volume, indicated by the circulation of 308,775 books and magazines in all media and the essential additional staff brought about critical overcrowding, causing one staff member to predict that the Braille and Talking Book Department would be the first to have double bunk desks. This plus more phone

calls and more of everything creates an atmosphere of constant distraction under poor working conditions. The staff has worked very hard this year and surmounted great obstacles. The honest pride they feel in their accomplishments is well justified. Our feeling is that 1972 was a very productive year for our department.

Other signs for the future were made possible by generous gifts, large and small, and some bequests. Free long distance communication with readers was begun with residents of Erie County, funded by the Estate of Clara L. Schaefer. This will be extended to all readers beyond the local area when funds permit. The Wickwire Fund paid for the cassette tape duplicator and the Friends of the Cleveland Public Library and other donors for blank cassettes. At the year's end Mrs. Katherine Holden Thayer made a gift that will provide a braille typewriter, cassette tape, large print books, and above all an Apollo Laser Visual Aid. A number of agencies for the blind and academic libraries have this aid, but the Cleveland Public Library may be the first to place it in the context of general public library service. It will make information in print directly accessible to many legally blind persons, students, business men, professional and general readers. When not in demand for library use it may be used for personal memoranda.

II. READER SERVICES

1. Braille

Tactile reading has held its own and is still the favorite medium of many, and of course the deaf-blind. Almost all of the Library of Congress braille magazines are now sent by direct mail to readers from the producer.

Mrs. Frances Peters reports a new use for twin-vision books by a young blind student teacher who uses them to test her theory that children with a learning disability could learn to read braille more easily than they could interpret print.

An important Braille project was the compilation of a recourse booklet which includes articles giving the flavor and character of Cleveland, discusses the city's climate, cultural, entertainment and sports facilities with a succinct listing of major downtown department stores, churches, social service agencies, museums, restaurants, office buildings, and federal and local government bureaus, with their individual addresses and phone numbers. It is hoped that the guide truly be a key to the city for the new blind resident or visitor. The brailleing was done in a few days by the always cooperative and efficient Volunteer Braille Service of the American National Red Cross, Greater Cleveland Chapter.

2. Cassettes

Mrs. Blanche Rich reports that the readers of cassette tape now number 829, up from 518 in 1971, and the circulation has grown from 4,236 in 1971 to 12,138 or 191%. Blast off came in January with the cassette project mentioned earlier. This involved recruiting 180 reader participants, and working with the Telephone Pioneer leadership responsible for distribution of equipment and the filling out of questionnaires with each participant. It necessitated operating two parallel circulation systems for three months and evaluating the results of the experience from the Library's viewpoint. The leaders of the Pioneers were: Robert White, Wallace Gilbert and George Faradin. At the library, invaluable assistance was given by volunteers: Ruth M. Baldwin, Frank Kranz and Pioneers: Nancy Ayers, Ray Christen, Marcellus Furlong and Stanley Seidman. Miss Casey's

preliminary draft is available and the final report will be distributed by the State Library. An abridged edition on cassettes has been promised by Miss Casey and will be duplicated by the Library for participants.

The cassette book collection is still in its infancy and is further hampered by problems of tape duplication. The original supply of blank tape was quickly exhausted since books on cassettes require a half dozen or so cassettes and there are multiple copies. Two large gifts, from the Friends of the Cleveland Public Library and from the Benjamin Gerson Family Foundation, and many smaller ones were used to buy blank cassettes, but at least \$5,000 a year is needed at present for any adequate tape duplicating program. After a reservoir of tape is on hand this amount should diminish.

Problems in the use of cassette books are still very great, but the stringent quality control standards established this year by the Library of Congress, far above the standards of the industry, are beginning to take effect. But reader cooperation and patience are needed since there appear to be many more foul-ups with cassettes than with open reel tape. The Library's cassette duplicating program is still carried by the Telephone Pioneers.

3. Open Reel Tapes

This service is waning, especially since the Library of Congress no longer lists new titles in TALKING BOOK TOPICS, and has not published its basic catalog on tape. Many excellent titles sit on the shelves. A tape edition of the Library of Congress catalog will be produced by this library in 1973 as well as a list of the Cleveland tapes which now number over 100 titles. This should stimulate their use and test the current potential of the service.

4. Large Type

Large type circulation showed some increase, but it is becoming clear that as more and more libraries include large type books in their budgets, more borrowers will find satisfaction in borrowing the books locally. A staff member worked as co-partner in a project to categorize and annotate the 700 new titles added to the collection since the last Large Type catalog was compiled. The new catalog supplement will introduce the Large Type readers to a wealth and variety of recent titles. It is hoped that it will be ready in the early Spring.

5. Talking Books

Talking books on discs are used by 95% of all readers and will continue to be basic for the next five or even ten years. It has been difficult to maintain service with the many drains on staff time and vitality created by the cassette survey, the computer changeover with its procedural side effects, serious and widespread illness, new staff and a reader increase of 24%. It has been up hill all year and more readers have been "out of books" than should have been the case. In general, other complaints seem to have held to a reasonable ratio between human frailty and number of persons served. Much appreciation was also expressed and a few vignettes chosen from the many interesting letters received during the year will illustrate the wide ranging interests of readers.

A blind mother asked for GREAT EXPECTATIONS to help a sighted child make a school book report. A visually handicapped man of 95 walks downtown from West 95th Street to pick up books on religion, political science and the magazines, US NEWS. He thinks the trouble with people today is that they don't walk enough. Another gentleman thanks his Selector for her "kindness and consideration" and continues,

"I spend three or four hours a day listening to your talking books and they are really a godsend for those who cannot read. Once in a while send me a nice love story. I'm ninety years old, but I still remember what love is like."

The President of the Knights of Columbus in a large city, and who is a physically handicapped reader, wrote in his Christmas letter to his friends,

"I receive the talking books, furnished by the Federal Government and what an enjoyment. Three books I thought were very fascinating were THE COMING FURY, TERRIBLE SWIFT SWORD, and NEVER SOLD RETREAT, a trilogy of the Civil War by Bruce Catton. Two weekly magazines, NEWSWEEK and SPORTS ILLUSTRATED, keep me well informed on current news and sports. I also receive monthly magazines, including the READER'S DIGEST. If you know of a blind or handicapped person, please do them a big favor and tell them about the talking books."

Miss Donna McGwinn who types with a mouthstick and is a free lance writer by profession had articles in TALKING BOOK TOPICS this year on book reviewing and the use of mouthsticks. A professor at Kent State arranged for two of her dyslexic students, who are bright boys to have cassette playback machines. Her husband who is blind and who reads both talking books and cassettes explained the use of the equipment to the boys.

Direct mailing of talking book magazines from producer to reader began with FARM JOURNAL, SPORTS ILLUSTRATED and RETIREMENT LIVING. Eventually all Library of Congress talking book magazines will be sent this way.

6. Childrens' Service

Mrs. Frances Peters also serves as Children's Specialist and reports as follows,

"Fall school visits to three Cleveland area Braille classes positively benefited the Department. Through discussions with the children, the Library came to be a more distinct agency in the children's perspective. Prior to the visits, some children (and their parents as well) considered the Library a somewhat amorphous extension of the Sight Center. Hearing a lively description of the row upon row of stacks where books are housed and the huge flatbeds of out-going mail and the day-long jangling of busy phones made it easier for the children to picture a 'library'.

"The most exciting part of school visits was when the children met the large stuffed Talking Dog which was created for the Library by the Telephone Pioneers. The walkie-talkie device concealed in a barrell around the dog's neck enabled 'him' to talk and tell riddles to the children while monitoring their responses. The young clerk, Randall Tiedman, who visited the Braille classes as the personality behind the Talking Dog admitted that the experience of dealing face-to-face with the youngsters gave special purpose to the endless flow of talking book container traffic that confronted him each day.

"A contest to 'Name the Talking Dog' was sponsored by this Department and opened to the children from Anthony Wayne, Forrest Elementary and Cricket Lane Elementary Schools. All the children submitted thoughtful choices, but it was decided that the winning entry should be appropriate as well as original. The prizewinning name was submitted by Lynn Wachtell who decided that the most appropriate name for a dog given to the children by the Telephone Pioneers would be 'Daniel Boone' ... Every child who entered the contest received a Brailled 'thank-you' note embossed with a large paw-print. The winner received a special book of riddles and an official certificate of award complete with the be-ribboned seal of approval. The announcement of the winning name was made in December at the Sight Center's annual party for children, during a special part of the program planned by this staff member. This bit of socializing provided an opportunity to meet the parents of many of our Juvenile readers and was a first-time contact with the little pre-schoolers and those children usually confined to Health Hill or Babies and Children's Hospital.

"The children's program closes the year on a progressive note and an upward trend in registration and circulation of materials and in anticipation of school visits to Sight Saving Classes and Learning Disability Classes throughout the Spring."

IV. OUTREACH AND LIAISON

The involvement of local public libraries is increasing in numbers and in depth. More libraries are beginning to contact new readers in their communities. The Youngstown and Columbus Public Libraries have joined Akron in incorporating service to talking book readers in their own large scale outreach services. It is hoped that Mrs. Eunice Lovejoy, the new Consultant for Library Service to the Handicapped, can take over part of the heavy load of public library liaison now carried by the Regional Library. It is imperative that the State and Regional Libraries develop specific plans for a concrete program in 1973 for a network in Ohio for library service to the handicapped.

There has been a steady stream of visitors, trainees, library school classes and individual students, students in special education, as well as the usual touring high school classes. One of the very keen library school students was a young woman who had visited the Library for the Blind when she was in junior high. A special staff program has been developed to cope with the important public relations responsibility.

The other most noteworthy items are: greater use of the long distance telephone for communication with readers and institutions, visits by Miss Audrey Hofstetter to selected nursing homes in the Spring, a book review by Mrs. Rich in March for the East Cleveland Club at the Sight Center, an exhibit at the conference of the Ohio Chapter of the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities. Of special importance was the Workshop in Columbus of the Rehabilitation Services Commission for their professional staff and talking book machine agencies on November 6th. It was also attended by Community Action organizations and a number of librarians involved in the talking book services. Mrs. Rich attended with Miss Prescott who described the services of the Regional Libraries of Ohio, with additional comments by Miss Donna Kemme who is the new Regional Librarian at Cincinnati. This workshop marked the beginning of active involvement by the Bureau of Vocational Guidance as well as the Bureau of Services for the Blind. It was organized by Mrs. Betty Willson, Head of the Talking Book Department of the Rehabilitation Services Commission.

V. INTERNAL MANAGEMENT

1. Registration

The enrollment rate of new readers was 30% greater in 1972 than in 1971. and took a big jump in November and December after the RSC Workshop mentioned above. Since then an average of 60 new registrations have been coming in each week. Mrs. Alpheia Durham reports that it takes about 20 minutes to process a registration so that with the 80 or so changes of address a month, and cancellations, the maintenance of reader records has become more than a full time job. Some procedures will be eliminated when the computer system is in full operation, but whether actual work in this particular area is saved remains to be proven.

The breakdown of the various reader groups is quite interesting and listed as follows:

Total number of readers 9,798
Served directly - 75%
Served in Institutions - 25%

By handicap
Blind - 60%
Visually Handicapped - 21%
Physically Handicapped - 19%

Percentage of each disability group served in Institutions
Blind - 7%
Visually Handicapped - 52%
Physically Handicapped - 63%

Readers under 14 years - 5%
Readers in Cuyahoga County - 29%

2. Machine distribution

There has been significant progress within the Regional Library. With the shift of duties made possible by the addition of Mrs. Durham in January, the talking book machine registration files have been reorganized and snags cleared. Mr. Randall Tiedman has organized the handling and packing of machines so that the inventory is in good order and the work flow clearly channelled. A new process sheet has proved to be very useful. Statistics for machine distribution are in the appendix. Mrs. Irene Ozvald is responsible for this activity.

Major policy changes have been put into effect this year which give the responsibility for maintaining the master list and state wide inventory of talking book machines to the Talking Book Department of the Rehabilitation Services Commission. The Cleveland Public Library and the Bureau of Services for the Blind exchanged statements of agreement which outline their responsibilities and relationship. The RSC issues machines to the Visually and Physically Handicapped as well as to the Legally Blind and accepts certification by competent authority as specified by Public Law 89-511 without its own medical review. It also agrees to respect confidentiality when "Library Service Only" is desired by the reader. Most sub-agencies in Societies for the Blind throughout the State have followed suit. The Cleveland Regional Library in turn now uses the application blank of the RSC,

orders its talking book machines through the RSC Talking Book Department and expects that its activity in machine distribution will decline while keeping freedom to issue machines as needed. Mrs. Willson is in charge of the Talking Book Department of the RSC and is most cooperative and consistent to deal with.

Cassette machines are in short supply, however, the Library of Congress is giving cassette machines a high priority in the fiscal year 1973-1974, so there will be a radical increase within a year.

VI. FUTURE PLANS

What happens in 1973 depends upon whether we can be financed well enough to have the staff to do the job. We have been refining our procedures for seven years and the ratio between staff and production is a direct one. By the end of the year we shall have reached the limit of the number of readers that can be served under the present manual circulation system and give them adequate service. Whether we can keep up after that or break down depends upon whether the much needed computerized circulation system comes through. Work space is crowded to the limit, and more room and quieter atmosphere for concentration is essential. The cassette program will probably double and in July cassettes will be recorded at 15/16 ips. Talking books will be recorded at 8 1/3 rpm, and intermaster tapes will begin to be supplied for talking books so that books on discs can also be reproduced as cassettes. The big question is how much progress can be made in computerization and in cassette duplication. Both programs require special funding above the customary budgeting plan, and have tremendous potential for the quality library service that readers are beginning to demand. These programs must be given high priority along with the eventual establishment of several sub-regional libraries in the largest centers of population. Plans for all three and their partial implementation will be the task of 1973.

Katherine Prescott, Regional Librarian
for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY
BRaille AND TALKING BOOK DEPARTMENT

Active borrowers during 1972 distributed by Counties in Ohio

COUNTY	BLIND	VISUALLY HANDICAPPED	PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED	GRAND TOTAL
Allen	58	10	15	83
Ashland	30	3	9	42
Ashtabula	71	7	3	81
Auglaize	21	8	16	45
Belmont	48	10	7	65
Carroll	7	1	4	12
Champaign	18	25	2	45
Clark	12	2	17	31
Columbiana	58	19	7	84
Coshocton	21	5	7	33
Crawford	38	4	4	46
Cuyahoga	1,630	725	481	2,836
Darke	19	10	6	35
Defiance	15	31	6	52
Delaware	29	12	35	76
Erie	47	19	3	69
Franklin	770	266	365	1,401
Fulton	24	8	4	36
Geauga	38	16	7	61
Guernsey	21	14	3	38

COUNTY	BLIND	VISUALLY HANDICAPPED	PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED	GRAND TOTAL
Hancock	32	4	5	41
Hardin	13	6	1	20
Harrison	13	6	0	19
Henry	23	16	12	51
Holmes	9	3	4	16
Huron	31	9	4	44
Jefferson	53	7	15	75
Knox	25	5	7	37
Lake	142	35	18	195
Licking	97	48	54	199
Logan	20	1	0	21
Lorain	187	91	99	377
Lucas	432	124	63	619
Madison	7	0	0	7
Mahoning	257	70	74	401
Marion	45	17	15	77
Medina	30	3	4	37
Mercer	11	12	3	26
Miami	22	1	0	23
Morrow	12	3	1	16
Muskingum	63	29	25	117
Ottawa	21	5	8	34
Paulding	9	1	1	11
Portage	59	23	28	110
Putnam	19	3	5	27

COUNTY	BLIND	VISUALLY HANDICAPPED	PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED	GRAND TOTAL
Richland	91	50	55	196
Sandusky	37	6	3	46
Seneca	56	33	24	113
Shelby	20	4	2	26
Stark	228	73	144	445
Summit	337	112	85	534
Trumbull	120	37	26	183
Tuscarawas	67	9	3	79
Union	14	14	1	29
Van Wert	19	7	26	52
Wayne	52	18	112	182
Williams	23	3	3	29
Wood	54	12	3	69
Wyandotte	31	2	4	37
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	5,756	2,097	1,938	9,791
Out of District	<hr/> 6	<hr/> 0	<hr/> 1	<hr/> 7
TOTAL OHIO	5,162	2,097	1,939	9,798
Outside Ohio	<hr/> 8	<hr/> 0	<hr/> 0	<hr/> 8
TOTAL	5,770	2,097	1,939	9,806

CIRCULATION OF BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

		<u>Adult</u>	<u>Juvenile</u>	<u>Total</u>
Total 1972		292,182	16,593	308,775
1971		268,258	11,128	279,386
	Increase	<u>23,924</u>	<u>5,465</u>	<u>29,389</u>
Talking Books and Magazines	1972	261,318	14,042	275,360
	1971	243,993	9,484	253,477
	Increase	<u>17,325</u>	<u>4,558</u>	<u>21,883</u>
Braille Books and Magazines	1972	12,198	1,840	14,038
	1971	<u>12,284</u>	<u>1,425</u>	<u>13,709</u>
	Increase		<u>415</u>	<u>329</u>
	Decrease	86		
Open Reel Books and Magazines	1972	5,403	71	5,474
	1971	6,758	97	6,855
	Decrease	<u>1,355</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>1,381</u>
Cassette Books	1972	11,591	547	12,138
	1971	4,130	106	4,236
	Increase	<u>7,461</u>	<u>441</u>	<u>7,902</u>
Large Type Books and Magazines	1972	1,672	93	1,765
	1971	<u>1,093</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>1,109</u>
	Increase	<u>579</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>656</u>